

Aflasafe™ coated on roasted sorghum is blue in colour. A natural blue food colourant dye is used to prevent the sorghum from being eaten by birds or human beings and to distinguish treated sorghum from non-treated sorghum.



Farmers applying Aflasafe™

Eating well!

Mrs Afya from Ministry of health briefed the villagers on how to reduce consumption of food contaminated with aflatoxins by eating a healthy diverse diet.

To reduce levels of Aflatoxin in our food, we need to eat a diverse diet; we should make sure we eat different types of food.



This not only reduces quantities of eating foods prone to aflatoxin contamination but will also improve your health in general.



Eat every type of food, carbohydrates, proteins and fruits and vegetables.

Some foods, like those based on maize and groundnuts are highly prone to aflatoxin contamination, while others, like potatoes, sweet potato, rice, and fruits and vegetables, are not.

So we should not eat a huge portion of Ugali everyday rather, eat a little portion of it and add sweet potato, Irish potatoes, rice, yams, arrow root, pumpkin, etc. Also ensure you eat some proteins from meat or legumes and plenty of fruits and vegetables everyday.

George Mahuku,
International Institute of Tropical Agriculture
East Africa Hub, IITA -Tanzania
P.O. Box 3444
Dar es Salaam,
Tanzania
Tel: +255222700092
Fax: +255222775021
E-mail: g.mahuku@cgiar.org

Beatrice Pallangyo,
Plant Health Services
Ministry of Agriculture
Livestock and Fisheries
P.O.BOX 9192
Dar es Salaam,
Tanzania.
Office: +255 22 2865642
E-mail: beatricepallangyo@yahoo.com



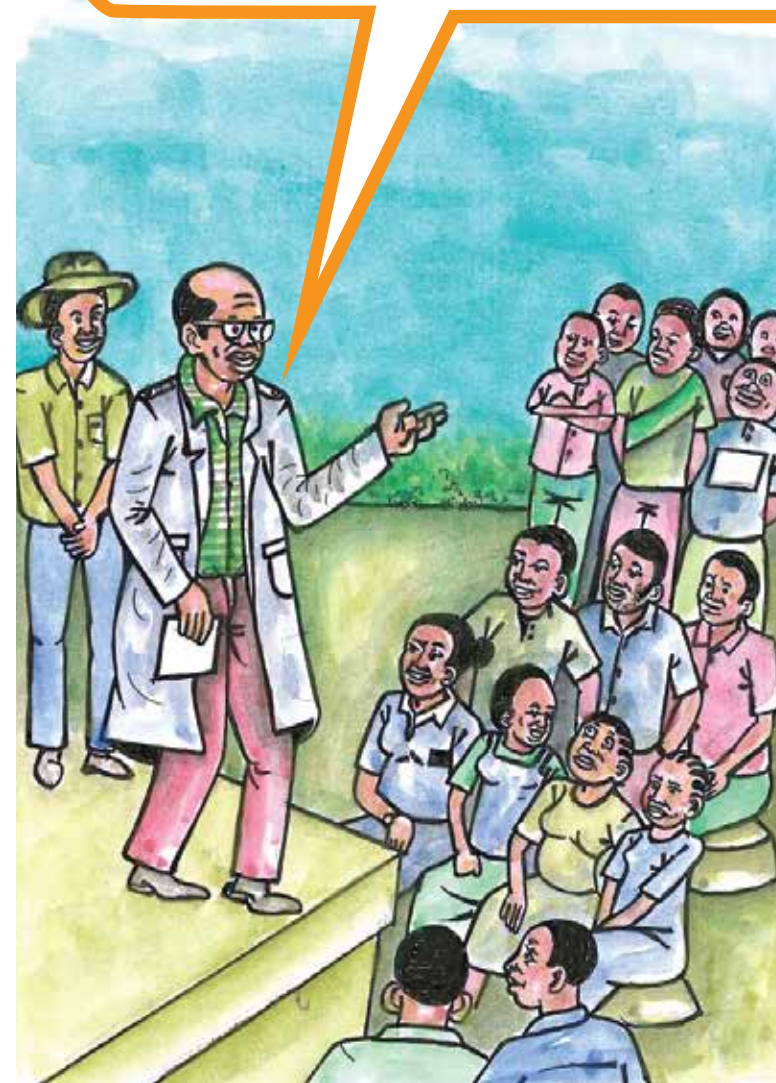
All about aflatoxin:

What it is, its effects and how to control it

Following the death of five people (2 adults and three children) in Masikitiko district from aflatoxin poisoning, a team of experts are going from village to village educating the public about the poison. Today the team has arrived at the village of Mambo Mema village. Dr Joseph Mlinge from the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries explains what is aflatoxin and how it's spread.

What is aflatoxin?

Aflatoxin is a poison produced by a fungus called *Aspergillus flavus*. The fungus resides in soil and decaying matter in the field. Therefore many crops can be contaminated by aflatoxins while in the field.

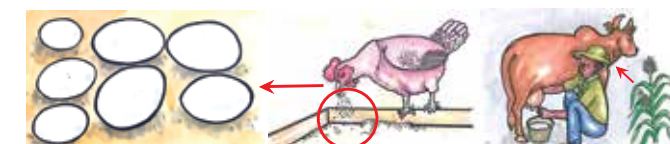


The most susceptible crops are maize and groundnuts.

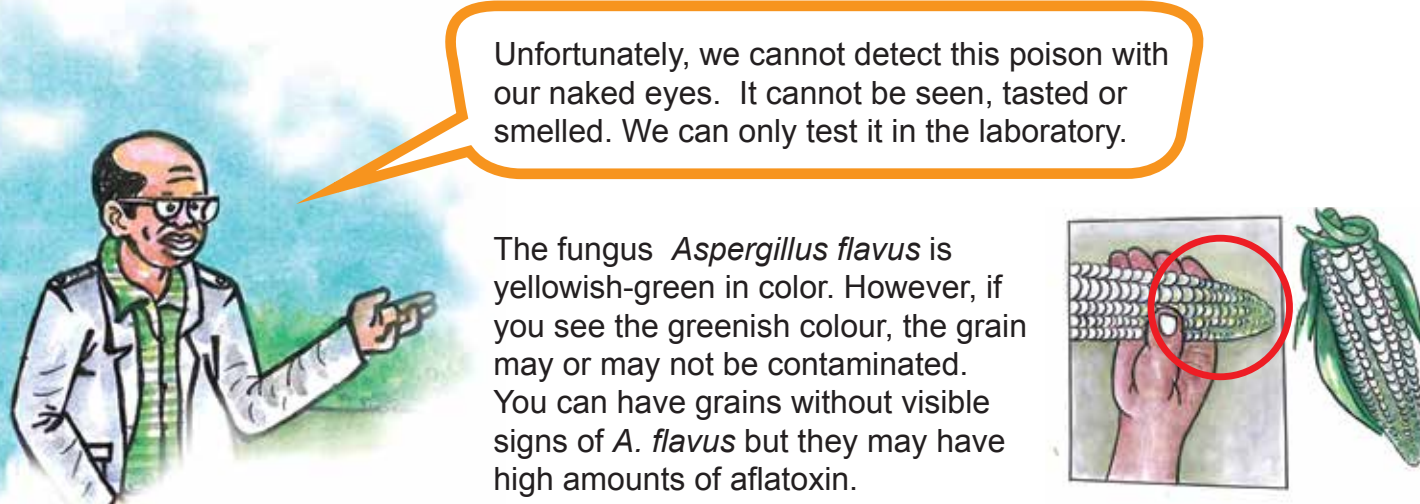
Mothers who eat foods contaminated with aflatoxin can have it in their milk and this can be passed to infants during breast feeding.



The poison can also be found in livestock products such as milk, eggs and meat when animals are fed on contaminated feed.



How can we detect it?



Unfortunately, we cannot detect this poison with our naked eyes. It cannot be seen, tasted or smelled. We can only test it in the laboratory.

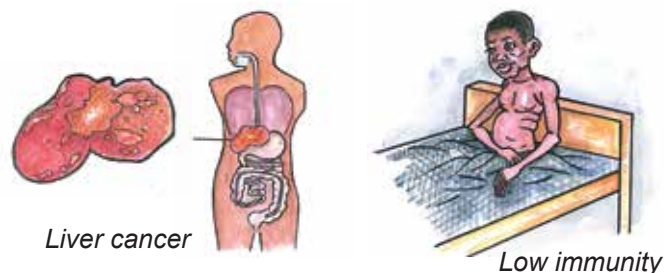
The fungus *Aspergillus flavus* is yellowish-green in color. However, if you see the greenish colour, the grain may or may not be contaminated. You can have grains without visible signs of *A. flavus* but they may have high amounts of aflatoxin.

What are the negative impact of of aflatoxins?

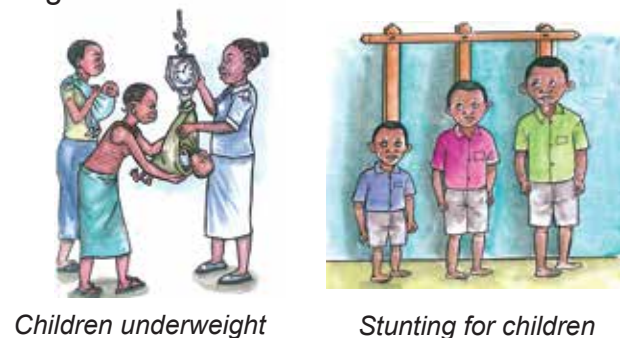
Mrs Maria Afya from Ministry of health briefs the villagers on the effects of aflatoxins on human beings, animals and markets.

1. Human beings

When people eat food with contaminated with aflatoxins for many years, they can have liver cancer. Their immune system is suppressed.



For children it leads to growth impairment which is manifested as underweight, malnutrition, and stunting.



Death! Consumption of food contaminated with extremely high levels of aflatoxins can lead to immediate death.



The aflatoxins affect human beings, livestock and even trade and markets



2. Livestock!

Aflatoxin also affects livestock, especially poultry. It affects their growth and reduces egg production.



3. Trade and markets

Aflatoxin affects markets. Aflatoxin-infected crops are forced into low value markets or destroyed. They cannot be exported.



How can we control aflatoxins?

Now that the villagers had learned about aflatoxins and its effects. The next question was how can they control it. Dr Mlinge explains:



How can we control aflatoxins?

We can keep aflatoxins away from our food and feed through applying good agricultural practices, such as good pre-harvest, handling and postharvest practices.

Good agriculture practices

These include;

- Harvesting the crop when well dried and making sure that the cobs are not in contact with soil*
- Sorting: Sort to remove the immature pods or cobs damaged by birds or rodents before drying and storage*
- Drying: Spread maize on raised platforms or place them on top of mates, such as tarpaulins to avoid contact with soil*
- Storage: Store your crops in a cool and dry place; place storage bags on raised platforms. Control storage insects and pests. Ensure they are not rained on.*



Use of AflasafeTZ



We can also use the safe and highly cost-effective biocontrol product called Aflasafe™ when it becomes available. It is made up of cousins of the fungus that produces aflatoxins but which do not produce aflatoxins. They are coated on roasted sorghum. They displace and kick out those that produce the poison.

Aflasafe was developed by the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA) in collaboration with the Agriculture Research Services of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and partners. We are working with IITA to develop a Tanzania product, AflasafeTZ. Aflasafe™ is totally safe and reduces Aflatoxin in crops by 80 to 99%.

